1:Gabb N-5 (1873-1874) 1876
SA19 Talamanca SA19

123 acquired the title of *Awe*. When asked by my brother professionals to exhibit my charms, I always gravely produced my little pocket compass, which, by its mysterious movements, never failed to impress them. I never could persuade the boldest to touch it.

262 Three kinds of fasts are observed. The first is only when ordered by the *U-sé'-ku-ru* on great public occasions. This is general and simultaneous over all the country. Sufficient food is prepared beforehand to last for three days, the usual time fixed. During those three days, no fires are lighted; the food is served and eaten in silence; no unnecessary conversation is allowed; the people stay strictly inside their houses, or if they go out during day time, they carefully cover themselves from the light of the sun, believing that exposure to the sun's rays would "turn them black"; no salt or other condiment is used in the food; no chocolate is drunk, and even tobacco is forbidden. The second kind is similar, though less rigid than the first, and is voluntary; the same restrictions are observed with reference to fires and food, but the people may talk and go out, avoiding, however, carefully all chance of contact with *bu-ku-ru'*. The third is still more limited, and is the individual fast already referred to for cleansing from *bu-ku-ru'*.

474 574 The feasts are of two classes; the death feast already described, and re-unions for labor. In the latter case; when a person wants to do an extraordinary piece of work, like clearing a piece of forest for a plantation, he provides a suitable quantity of food, and especially of chicha. On the day appointed his neighbors unite early at his house, or at the spot designated, and work industriously until about noon. All then repair to the house, and, after a good round of chicha drinking, food is served, followed by more chicha. After a while dancing begins, and is kept up as long as the chicha holds out. Sometimes the work is continued for two or three days, but always ends early in the day, the afternoon and evening being devoted to eating and especially to drinking.

241 [461 [273 No labor can be accomplished without liberal allowances of chicha, and the man who is the most profuse in this respect is the best fellow. A man will sometimes undertake to make his own clearing, unassisted, but it is very slow work, and drags on at the rate of two or three hours' work a day, with many days of rest. The trees once cut down, the man will burn off the brush, assisted by his sons, or sons-in-law, if he has any, and then plants his crop; usually corn for making more chicha. After that it has to take care of itself. He goes out occasionally to hunt, fish, or sometimes to bring a bunch of plantains. When the corn is nearly ripe, the boys have to watch it to scare off the parrots and pigs. If there are no boys in the family, then all hands usually go and occupy a little shed in, or on the edge of the cornfield. They feast on the green and ripening corn until it is too hard to boil, and then collect what has been left to ripen.

462 The labor of the women is to bring plantains and water, and to cook and wash. They are never required to do work in the plantation, unless

1:Gabb N-5 (1873-1874) 1876
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it be perhaps, to help gather and to help carry home the corn. All the sewing is done by the men, even of the little shirts or jackets worn by the women. In carrying loads, the women rival the men in power and endurance. It is nothing uncommon to see a woman, with a big load on her back, and her year old baby seated on top, with his little legs dangling over the front edge of the load. The little monkeys ride securely there through the bush and dodge the overhanging vines and branches as expertly as could be done by an old horseman. When working for each other the people use their own machetes and axes, as a matter of course; but when hired by a foreigner, they invariably expect to be furnished with tools by their employer. 462 482 464

Domestic industry is at the very lowest ebb. Manufactures can hardly be said to exist. The only articles made, beyond furniture, arms &c., are hammocks, net bags, cotton cloth, and pottery. All of these are coarse and inferior in quality. None of the skill exhibited by the Guatemalan Indians exists here. The hammocks are made of a coarse twine, derived from the leaves of a species of *agave*, and are loosely woven in a frame with a needle. They are hardly long enough for an ordinary person to lie at length in them with comfort, and are used more for seats than for sleeping. They are swung between the posts of the house, near the door, and at a height of from a foot to a foot and a half from the floor. Everything is carried in net bags. They are made with a needle of bone and "meshed" like our fish nets. Some of them are very fine and they are of all sizes, from three inches to two feet deep. They are suspended by a string made of the same material, usually an inch wide and woven openly, in the same manner as the hammocks. The material of the finer and ordinary bags is the fibre of a species of aloe, or *agave*, much finer than that used for hammocks, and naturally nearly white. It is usually dyed of various colors to suit the fancy of the maker. The colors are obtained from several of the native plants and are very durable. A coarser kind is made of the same fibre as the hammocks. These are made with larger meshes, and are used to carry plantains, corn &c., from the field to the house. 28 32 286 [513] [386] [482]

The people of Tirribí procure all their bags from the Bri-bris, and I believe, their hammocks also. The Valientes, living beyond the Tiribis, in the adjoining parts of the District of Chiriquí, make similar bags, but much finer and more elaborately wrought. The colors in the Bri-bri nets are always arranged in simple bands, while the patterns of the Valiente nets are often complicated and exhibit considerable taste. 438 531

Belts, breech-cloths, cloths for wrapping the bones of the dead, and women's petticoats are woven of cotton. The cotton is raised with no care beyond planting a few seeds and allowing the plants to take care of themselves. They grow to the height of ten or twelve feet, and almost every house has a few in its vicinity. The yellow flowers, buds, and open bolls are seen all the year round, together on every tree. The women collect the ripe cotton, pick it from the seeds with their fingers and spin 286 [248] [283]

it.

1:Gabb N-5 (1873-1874) 1876
SA19 Talamanca SA19

286 it. The loom is a simple frame of four sticks, the two upright ones are planted in the ground; the other two rudely tied to these. The warp is wrapped around the two horizontal bars and a simple contrivance of threads is arranged to open and reverse it. The thread for the woof wound on slender sticks is then passed through in the usual manner and driven tight by blows of a smooth stick. The process is exceedingly slow [462] and tedious and I have never seen it performed except by the men. The belts are usually two to three inches wide and four or five feet long. [291] Breech-cloths are about four feet long and a little more than a foot wide. The cloths for the dead and the women's petticoats are wider and a trifle longer. Except the cloths for the dead, which are woven white and afterwards painted, most of this cotton work is ornamented with colors. Be- [386] sides native vegetable dyes, the people of Bri-bri buy cotton dyed a dirty purple with the blood of the *murex*. This is procured from the people of [438] Terraba on the Pacific. They also now occasionally buy colored threads of foreign production, especially a rich bluish purple, of which they are particularly fond. All of this weaving is with very coarse thread, nearly as thick as the finer twines used by shopkeepers in the United States for tying small packages. The cloth is consequently coarse in texture and rough in appearance, but closely woven and soft to the feel. It makes excellent towels, though rather heavy for that purpose. The largest piece of work of this kind I ever saw, was a blanket large enough to cover a good sized double bed. It was in possession of an old woman who wanted to sell it to me for a cow, and refused ten dollars cash.

The pottery now made is the coarsest and poorest I have ever seen. 323 None of the finely made and elaborately ornamented vessels found in the 415 *huacas* or graves are made at present. The use, for half a century or more, of foreign cast-iron pots and kettles has restricted this industry, and possibly helped to injure the character of the work. But two or three vessels taken by me from Tiribi graves, certainly not less than fifty or sixty years old, are in no respect superior to those made at the present day. Native earthenware is now only used for receptacles for chicha. The jars are large—say from ten to twenty gallons capacity. The form is very simple, the workmanship is rough, the clay is coarse and badly mixed, the burning is almost always imperfect, and they are always without the slightest attempt at ornament. The jars are moulded by hand, the clay being added spirally, and moulded by the fingers and trimmed with a smooth stick, in exactly the same manner as I have seen done by the negro women in Santo Domingo. After a certain amount of drying, they are burnt in the open air, in a fire of sticks heaped over them. Each jar is burnt separately.

Although not given to unnecessary exertion, these people travel occa- 484 sionally from house to house, and even make journeys to Terraba and Limon. The laziest will gladly walk for two days to a dance. They also occasionally go off into the less frequented regions to collect sarsaparilla, with which to buy whatever of foreign manufacture they may want, like

1:Gabb N-5 (1873-1874) 1876
SA19 Talamanca SA19

tains boiled and mashed, are mixed in equal quantities of corn-meal paste to make chicha, or to bake in cakes. They are also, when ripe, boiled, mashed into a paste, and mixed with water into a gruel. This is drank under the name of *mish'-la*. Maize is raised in considerable quantities, and this really involves four-fifths of all their agricultural labor. The corn is of a variety of colors; white, yellow, red, purple, blue, and almost perfectly black. Sometimes the ear, rarely more than six or seven inches long, is of a uniform color, but more generally the grains are of two or more colors. It is boiled green and eaten from the cob, and is thus considered a great delicacy. It is, when ripe, ground for all other purposes. The process of grinding is rude and simple in the extreme. If possible, a stone, three feet long and two wide, with a flat upper surface, is procured. In default of this, a broad slab of wood is used. For this purpose, a piece cut from one of the plank-like buttresses of the Ceiba tree is procured, and one side dressed smooth. The remainder of this primitive mill, is a stone, about a foot or fourteen inches long, a few inches less in width and three or four inches thick. One side must be regularly curved. The corn, soaked over night to soften it, is placed on the flat surface and the stone last mentioned is rocked on its edge, from side to side. This is always done by the women. When the corn is sufficiently ground, the paste is put into an iron pot and boiled to mush. If it is intended to make cakes, a part of the raw paste is mixed with an equal quantity of boiled ripe plantain paste, to sweeten it. It is then rolled in plantain leaf and baked in the ashes. When the paste is boiled, sometimes a part of it is separated, thinned to the consistency of gruel, and drunk hot. If it is intended to make chicha for the road, the thick mush is at once mixed with an equal part of ripe plantain paste as before, and tied up in leaves. This will keep sweet for two or three days, but gradually fermentation takes place, and at a week old, it has a not unpleasant sweetish acid taste. When ready for drinking, it is dissolved in cold water to a thin gruel. The taste for it is easily acquired, and I admit, I became very fond of it. It certainly does possess intoxicating properties, but I cannot conceive how any civilized stomach could accommodate a sufficient quantity to produce exhilaration. Still I have seen Indians very happy from its effects. But since I desire these notes to be believed, I do not dare to state the quantity I have seen one of these fellows drink. Were only half the truth told, it would appear incredible. The method of preparing the chicha for use in the house is slightly different. The paste is thinned at once, while yet hot. The plantain paste, also thinned, is poured into the earthen jar with it, and sufficient water is added to bring it to the proper thinness for drinking. To produce rapid fermentation another process is yet necessary, which I saw once at Dipuk on the Uren. A young girl (young girls only, with sound teeth perform this operation,) having previously rinsed her mouth with a little water, sat down on a low stool, with a pile of tender raw corn beside her, and a big calabash in her lap. She chewed, or rather bit the grains from the

2:Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri

286 *Weaving.*—Two women's blanket skirts of woven cotton were obtained after considerable search, one of which is shown in pl. XVIII, *b*. As the manufacture of cotton cloth is now said to be a lost art, we must turn again to Gabb[14] for his observations.

"Belts, breech-cloths, cloths for wrapping the bones of the dead, and women's petticoats are woven of cotton. The cotton is raised with
248 no care beyond planting a few seeds and allowing the plants to take care of themselves. They grow to the height of ten or twelve feet and almost every house has a few in its vicinity. The yellow flowers, buds, and open bolls are seen
● [462] all the year round, together on every tree. The women collect the ripe cotton, pick it from the seeds with their fingers and spin it. The loom
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292 little more than a foot wide. The cloths for the
286 dead and the women's petticoats are wider and

243 flint-corn," and the other as "dent corn." The various colors are secondary characteristics, and cannot be classified as distinct specimens.[20] The bean preferred is a variety
244 (*Phaseolus vulgaris* L.) found, in Costa Rica, only among the *Boruca*.[21] It is a pole bean, and is red with large white spots.

241 The Indians visit their farms daily, leaving
[512] the village early each morning and returning about four or five in the afternoon. They
[262] take with them a lunch usually consisting of one or two items including either a tamale called *tʃari-kɔ*, which is made of dried green plantains, or chicha made from corn. The
●[462] primary clearing of the forest to make the field is done by both men and women. The felled trees are burned in the dry season, and from then on, only the women, often assisted by the children, do the work.

245 In the village, and often on the savannas, guavas (*guayabos*) (*Psidium Guajava* L.), *Inga* (guavas) (*Inga spectabilis* [Vahl] Willd.), Spanish plums, *jocotes* (*Spondias purpurea* L.), and nances (*Byrsonima crassifolia* [L.] DC.) are found. These trees, although apparently not cultivated today, may well have been so in ancient times.

Gathering and Cultivating Methods.
412 The agricultural implements of the present-
[177] day *Boruca* are almost completely borrowed from the *ladino*. The common tools are broad machetes and *macanas*, which have possibly evolved from a digging stick, and are made with a wooden shaft or handle and a small iron flat-edged blade at one end. This is used for digging holes or even cutting roots in the field. Spades and an instrument called a *cuchillo*, which is a long knife or machete, are also common.

243 The women open holes for sowing, using a
[462] long pole with a point at one end. The seeds are carried in a gourd (see p. 19) in one hand, and sown with the other. Ordinarily

form, as well as to make chicha. It is particularly prized, along with other colored ears, as ritual offerings to the saints or to ancient gods.

[20] The writer thanks don Jorge Leon of the Institute of Inter-American Affairs, Food Production Division, San José de Costa Rica, for the above information.

[21] The Boruca bean is also known in Guatemala, particularly in the west, where it is called *pinto*.

243 the crop is gathered only by the women and
[462] children, but rice is gathered also by the men.
For this purpose, an implement made of cow
413 horn and metal with a fiber string is used. The
243 horn portion serves as a handle, fitting into the
palm of the hand while the metal part is
sharpened as a knife, and protrudes between
the index and the third finger. The string
goes over the thumb to help steady the whole.
[177] This implement (see fig. 3, *c*) may have been
borrowed from the Chiriquíans (i.e., the
people from Chiriquí, Panamá, who formerly
had homesteaded much of this area), and who
use a similar tool, or it may be a local *Boruca*
inspiration. The cutters are frequently
decorated with lineal designs and initials (see
fig. 3, *c*). The cutting of the rice is done with
the right hand, the left being used to hold the
plant. As with all other products, however,
[462] only the women and children bring the rice
in from the fields, piling it in large baskets
called *habas* in Spanish (see p. 15).

249 **Sugar, its Manufacture.** Sugar is extracted
417 from sugar cane in a very primitive fashion
(see fig. 3, *d*). A tree with a knot is picked,
and the knot hollowed out. About a foot or
so distant, a forked portion of tree is placed
erect, and one end of a hewn thick plank,
slightly indented in the center, is rested in the
fork with the other end against the live tree.
A long pole is inserted in the knot hole, and
a banana leaf is placed between the plank and
the fork. Cane is put between the pole and
the plank. One person holds and pushes one
end of the cane and another pulls and receives
it, while a third pumps the pole up and down.
The cane is twisted to extract more juice as
it is pulled through the presser. The juice
runs down the plank, the leaf serving as a
canal to guide the liquid into a vessel placed
on the ground. When the pressing is over, the
juice is boiled until an unrefined sugar remains.

231 **Domestic Animals.** As a rule, a family
possesses a few chickens, some pigs, and an ox.
The only one of these creatures which are
given any semblance of shelter are the
chickens, which, at night, are put in small
houses (see figs. 4, *a*, *b*, *c*—see p. 23). In
some households, there are dogs, which are
used for hunting, and occasionally cats and
birds. The birds are generally kept as pets,
although at times they are raised for food.

longer easily accessible, caulking is done with the wax from a related species found around Boruca, or from the glue made from a palm belonging to the genus *Elaeis* and called in Boruca, *tuskra'* (see p. 19), and with the gum of the wild rubber tree (see pp. 19–20).

There remain certain families of "river Indians" who are famous for their skill with the dug-outs, particularly in the rapids, and there were formerly outstanding sailors for the sea-going *bongos*. On the river, both paddles with plain handles and poles are used.

Carrying Devices. Generally, the women carry cargo (see figs. 7, *a*; 8, *a*). The men very seldom do such labor. A tumpline is used to support the article which rests on the back of the individual or in a *haba* (see below), which is also carried in a similar manner (see fig. 8, *a*). Occasionally, string bags (see fig. 8, *b*–4, 5, 7, and p. 18) are swung from the forehead down the back. They are, however, rarely used like this, being generally left to hang on the house wall. Babies are carried in a shawl or cloth on the back.

MANUFACTURES

desired pieces. *Pita* is not used for heavy rope, but is made into cord and a "fishing line" which is tied to the fishing spear or arrow (see p. 8). The leaf of the *cabuya* is beaten on stones until it is pulpy, after which it is washed, and then dried in the sun. When dry, it is pulled into strips.

Figure 8, *d* is a sample of the two kinds of rope the *Boruca* make. The upper portion is twisted and braided, while the lower half is only braided. This last method makes a stronger rope. When the rope is finished, it is tied at the end, and one of the strips is twisted around the whole, passed through the braid, and then pulled tightly.

Basketry. The typical basket of the *Boruca* is what is called in Spanish the *haba*, and in Boruca *ha'va*. It is woven by the men. The *haba* (see figs. 7, *b*–2; 8, *a*, *b*–1, 3) is made only from the *bejuco negro*, the strips of which must be cut in lengths according to the size desired for the finished product, as in this type of basket one cannot add extra length or depth. The smallest *haba* is about 9 inches in depth, and is used for washing corn. For a

3:Stone E-5 (1945) 1949
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Boruca

237 386 [648] Indians, but also by the Spaniards who demanded purple thread, during the Conquest and the colonial period, as tribute for the church as well as for themselves.[28] For a more complete discussion of this purple dye in other parts of Central America, see MacCurdy.[29] Another, not so strong, purple dye is gathered from a small mollusk (*Purpura kiosquiformia* Duclos) which lives on the roots of the mangrove trees (*Rhizophora Mangle* L.). This creature must be killed to be of use. The soft part of the shell is removed, and the liquid it contains is put on a thin stick and *drawn* on the material in the same manner as using a colored pencil. When first applied, the liquid is black, but it turns purple on drying. This is employed very seldom today, as the little weaving that is done has generally woven designs, and is not painted.

286 [462] The actual weaving is done by the women seated on the low bench that is characteristic of the *Boruca* (see p. 13). The loom used is horizontal with a warp beam and a back strap, the other end of the loom being fastened to the wall of the house or to a tree (see fig. 9, *d*). The crossing of the weft is accomplished with a straight wooden rod, after which the woof is pressed into position with a wooden sword slightly longer than the width of the cloth. A shed stick is used, but there is no heddle rod. The width of the web is kept even by the temple, which is a piece of cane, preferably the part near the inflorescence, with a bone point at each end (see p. 18).

[531] The cloth woven by these people is usually heavy with a stripe design (see fig. 7, *d*). Some women, however, weave a conventionalized geometric pattern horizontally across the white space between the stripes (see fig. 9, *a*), not permitting the design to appear on the reverse side of the cloth. This is a single-faced [171] weft-pattern weave, and is a technique unknown elsewhere in Central America. It has been found in ancient graves on the Ecuadorian coast, by the island of Puna.[30] Men's belts are also striped, although the thread used and the weaving is finer than that of the skirts.

burn, 1779, p. 112.

[28] See MacCurdy, 1911, pp. 160–61.

[115] [29] Information given to the writer by Professor Carlos Zeballos M., Director of the Municipal Museum, Guayaquil, Ecuador.

[p. 17-B]

286 [462] **Bags.** Bags (fig. 8, *b–3*) are woven only by the men. They are made by cutting strips of *majagua*, *pita*, or whatever material is used, very, very thin. This is then twisted into a fine cord. The bag is started from a circle of this cord. The end is passed through this, and a knot is made, leaving a loop. Once the circle has been started, the whole is put on the ground, and the maker puts his heel on top of the center. Two knots are made, one on each side of a loop, each time the cord is passed through a loop. When the work is large enough to be managed more easily, it is taken off the ground and held between the knees. Some bags are made with only one knot at each intersection. Bags are used for carrying [415] the gourd water bottle, for keeping materials, and for carrying or keeping odds and ends.

Hammocks. The *Boruca* men make a hammock, from *majagua* (see fig. 8, *b–6*). The weave is coarser than the hammocks made by the *Bribri* from the same material. In hammock-making, the strips are twisted tightly and fastened around a stick which is placed horizontally at each end. The weaving is done with the fingers. Each time the strip is woven in and out of the spaces left by the original strips and then looped over the sticks at the end. When the hammock is finished, a turkey or chicken thigh bone is usually substituted for the sticks, and acts as a link between the hammock and the rope which ties the hammock to the wall.

285 295 **Hats.** One or two Indian men occasionally make straw hats from the leaf of the *sem-kra'* (see p. 7). The leaf is first dried in the sun, then cut into thin strips, and the hat is woven basket-fashion, commencing from the center of the crown. This whole technique is not common to the *Boruca* and is probably borrowed from the Chiriquíanos who are found scattered through much of southeastern Costa [439] Rica. The hats are made to sell in *ladino* towns, and are seldom used by the *Boruca*.

287 **Bark Cloth.** Today, the *Boruca* do not profess to use bark cloth or *mastate* (fig. 7, *c – 4*) as part of their dress, nor do they use it any longer for sails (see p. 15). Occasionally, bark cloth is used as a blanket for sleeping. The *Boruca* claim to have worn *mastate* as late as 1933, when they had easy access to the coast

323 [177] reverting to make their clay cooking pots as before. There are several common pottery shapes. One kind is a large vessel with a pointed base which is slightly rounded, and a projection near the base, the neck indented, and a projecting rim. This type is called *kwure'* in Boruca, and resembles the Spanish *tinaja*. Other forms consist of smaller vessels with rounded base and a flat protruding rim, at times with a projecting nubbin, as if an attempt to portray a head, tail, and wings, such as is encountered on the pots found in ancient graves; and sometimes the *comal* or indented clay dish which is used for frying. Plain rounded vessels, often with a thumb-nail design on the border or rim, are common for cooking.

[462] Women are the potters. The usual way of making a vessel is to mash the clay, if soft, with the hands, and if hard, with a stick, until it is fine. Then a coil is made of this clay, and the coil doubled over to give more strength to the whole. The base is started with these coils in the manner of a large tortilla, or corn cake. A rounded wooden mold is used only for the base. The clay tortilla is put in the mold and shaped to the sides. Then coils of clay are added, and the vessel grows above the mold. Smoothing and evening are done with the hands. Once completed, the pot is left from fifteen days to one month within the house to dry. The excess clay is then removed with a knife, and the vessel is polished by rubbing it all over with a seed which comes from a vine called in Spanish *ojo de buey* (*Mucuna urens* [L.] DC.). A bed of firewood is made outside the house, and the vessel is placed in the center. Firewood is stacked around the pot until it is covered. Fire is set, and the wood burns away leaving the vessel intact. When a particularly strong pot is desired, a *masa* is added. This *masa* is ground corn mixed with water to form a paste. It is put both inside and outside of the vessel at the moment it is removed from the fire, and while it is still red from the heat. After the pot is cold, the *masa* is removed.

383 314 Rubber. The use of rubber does not seem to be very ancient with the *Boruca*. The gum from the wild rubber tree which abounds in the vicinity (*Castilla fallax* O. F. Cook) is

[p. 19-B]

occasionally used on the dug-out canoes.

241 Women formerly felled trees and did as much field labor as the men. Today, however,
462 *women do not clear the forest although they*
[178] do cut the weeds and grass. On both sides of the range, men and women work in the fields and harvest crops.

262 **Cultivated Crops.** The basic diet of these
241 peoples consists of tubers, *pejibaye*, cacao, bananas,[61] and plantains.

244 The importance of tubers is easily understood when one takes into account the following advantages: they can be grown in a wide range of soils; propagate without trouble; have few serious pests; will tolerate heavy rainfall; and are available throughout the year. The
[137] principal root crops are yucas (*Manihot esculenta* Crantz) including the white, yellow, reddish, and purple varieties;[62] *tiquisqui* or *malanga* (*Xanthosoma violaceum* Schott); white and yellow *ñame* (*Dioscorea* spp.) and purple and white *ñampi* (*Dioscorea trifida* L.).
245 Cacao, bananas, and plantains are also year-round products which, once planted, do not need constant attention.

245 In fact, most of these basic foodstuffs are
262 in production continually, assuring a permanent source of food. The *pejibaye* usually bears twice a year and requires from two to seven years of growth before producing its first crop. The value of its fruit as an element of diet, however, cannot be underestimated.[63]
[137] There are several kinds of *pejibayes*—some red and some yellow, both with and without seeds.[64] They have been a traditional item of diet for the Talamancans since pre-Columbian times when they appear to have been cultivated extensively.[65] They are present at every ancient and modern indigenous site, but are not found wild in the forest.

262 This basic diet is supplemented with several
241 varieties of beans among which are the *kubas*

[137] [177] [61] The banana is not an indigenous American foodstuff. It was brought to this continent at the time of the Spanish conquest by Friar Tomás de Berlanga.

[62] These names apply chiefly to the plant without the tuber. The distinguishing characteristics are: white yuca has many and large leaves and a straight trunk; yellow yuca has a yellow trunk and tuber; purple yuca has purple leaves but the root is white; red yuca has red leaves and white tubers.

[63] For food value of this fruit, *see* Appendix I.

[64] The Boruca are the only Costa Rican people who

224 262 this method of hunting that only cold food may be eaten before the hunt as hot food brings bad luck.

226 **Fishing.** The most common method of fishing is with the bow and barbed or straight palm-wood arrow (fig. 3, *b*). Small fish are sometimes killed by the blow of a machete and hooks are occasionally used. Grasshoppers [825] are the favorite bait. These are caught and [227] kept in a gourd in which air holes have been [415] bored and a corncob is used as a stopper or cap until ready for use. Grasshoppers can live five days in such a container. Conical casting nets, similar to those used by the Guaymí of Panama, are also employed. On the Pacific side, amongst the Bribri, sometimes the stream is dammed and a wooden fish trap is used.

Next to the bow and arrow, however, the most popular manner of fishing is with poisons. [278] The two most frequently used are obtained [824] from a tree (*Phyllantus* sp. Pittieri) and from a vine (*Serjania* sp.).[73] The tree poison blinds and kills all fish, and is so strong that the day after a person has handled it, it is common for his face to remain swollen and to hurt. When this poison is used, the river is dammed with tree trunks downstream. Around four o'clock in the morning thirty or so men begin to [462] scrape or shred pieces of the *Phyllantus* into [857] the water. Non-pregnant women and children gather downstream to collect the fish in baskets (*bavas*). The organizer of this event receives one or two fish from each participant, the number depending on the total amount caught, and can keep all that he himself [178] catches. Today, permission has to be obtained [625] from the police agent in Talamanca and the organizer has to give him a share.

The vine colors the water green but only stuns the fish. It is used in small creeks and not large rivers. Only two men are needed to fish in this way. The vine, leaves, and stem are beaten into small pieces with a stick and then are thrown into the dammed waterway. [278] A third fish poison is sometimes prepared from [824] a tuber which resembles the *ñame*. It is called *wiwəkri* in Bribri and is mashed and thrown into the water.

252 **Food Preparation.** On the whole, food is

[73] For the indigenous names *see* Plant List in Appendix.

½ [SCA category 116 - END PLATE 2 - ANALYST.]

Ujarrás, and China Kichá, the hearth is more often constructed of clay on a wooden table. Here wooden beds and mezzanines made of wooden rods are used for sleeping along with hammocks. Plates, spoons, cups, etc., are seen in every household although their number is limited according to the family purse. The low stool is always present but a chair and a table are found now and then. Hanging shelves serve for storing food and all manner of odds and ends. Yeast for chicha, generally wrapped in *bijagua* leaves, is hung on the wall posts. The fondness for decorating the wall with feathers, eggshells, bones, and skins, however, remains the same as on the Caribbean side. Attached to the exterior of the house are hen's nests made of vine baskets or *havas*, a wild plant or orchid, and generally a piece of tree trunk containing wild bees.

DRESS AND ADORNMENT

An early report concerning the expedition of Fray Margil to the Province of Talamanca states:

> Their dress is very poor, because the men (are dressed) with their cloth of skins, and the women with their short cloths, and those who do not have them, with plantain leaves appear as contented as the best dressed Spaniards.[80]

Today, bark cloth (*see* Manufactures and Trade), still called *mastate* in Spanish, is used in upper Talamanca and upper Chirripó as shirts or Mother Hubbards, as loin cloths, and as bed covering. In the rest of the area inhabited by the Talamancas, it is only used as blankets. Sewing is done by both men and women but chiefly by the men.

The ordinary woman's garment consists of

y vara y medio de largo, con que cubren las partes de honestidad; las mujeres andan con una manta de lo mismo y algunas de algodón que la atan desde la cintura a las rodillas. . . ."

[80] De Espinosa, 1742, p. 64. "Su vestir es pobrisimo, porq los hombres con sus cendales de pieles, y las mujeres con sus pañalitos cortos, y las que no los tienen, con hojas de platanos se hallan tan contentos como los mas bien vestidos Españoles."

6:Stone E-5 (1956-1959)1962
[P.21(B)] SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri
Cabecar

482 (fig. 9, *d*). *Hevas* fastened to the tumpline are also used by both sexes to carry cargo.

487 **Roads.** The forest of southern Costa Rica is
[137] among the densest in the world. Trails, how-
ever, have been kept open since pre-Columbian
[438] times when trade was common between the Pacific and Caribbean sides (*see* Trade). Even today, one passes through cleared tunnels under the matted roots of trees and shrubs which, according to tradition, are the same passages "used by all our grandfathers." Of the three trails which cross the range (*see* Geography), that connecting the Lari region with
491 Cabagra is famous for its hammock bridges made of vines which span chasms and swift-flowing, boulder-ridden rivers. These bridges are also known in upper Chirripó. They are
[193] called in Bribri *t'sá* which is the same word used for hammock, vine, bridge, and string. The vines are woven netlike to form one or two sides. The first type can be either a single net, the person crossing sideways as a crab, or it is placed as a railing along a log. To make the second style, two stout vines are swung across the space to be bridged and fastened securely on both sides. A narrow foot path of braided vines is tied to these so as to form a *V*, and the sides are laced in a large V-shape, or netlike, to the braided portion (fig. 11, *a*). These hammock bridges are remade every six months by the men from the nearest houses.

MANUFACTURES

283 One of the most important fibers comes
[824] from *pita* (*Agave* sp.). The presence of this
[172] plant in the forest is a sign, like the *pejibayes*, of a former habitation site. *Pita* is made into
● [462] thread to tie arrows, carrying nets, etc. Both men and women prepare this fiber, although it is generally the women's task. The leaf is cut, peeled, and both ends chopped off to even the length. Every five inches the leaf is folded to soften it, and then it is put on a log and scraped with the blunt edge of a machete from the top to the bottom. At the bottom end, the woman pulls the remaining outer fibers off and ties the two ends of the leaf

[49] Pittier, 1938, p. 13.

283 together, or makes a knot in each, throwing away the outer portion. She beats the peeled leaves with a stick and wets them thoroughly, tying all ends together. The beating and washing are repeated to remove whatever green of the outer leaf might remain, and then it is bleached in the sun. Finally, the fiber is rolled out on the knee, backwards and forwards, in two thick strands and afterwards rolled together, or it is divided into the size wanted and rolled separately.

[824] *Cabuya* (*Furcraea* sp.) is also very important. It is treated in the same manner and made into rope and thread for hammocks, especially by the Bribri men. The fiber is rolled on the
● [462] thigh by both sexes to make thread. The men use a *pejibaye* needle to weave it and stretch the finished product to the desired size by means of a long stick.

[824] On both sides of the range, *peine del mico*
[482] (*Apeiba tibourbou* Aubl.) is fashioned into rope and bands to carry packs. There are two ways of preparing this. The best method is rather drawn out because the fiber must come from the inside and not from the outer bark which breaks easily. This requires removing the outer portion as the bark is taken from the tree. The inside is held under water with stones for 15 days. The interior part of this separates and a gluelike sap exudes leaving a white fiber. The second method does not call for removing the outer bark first. The process in the water is the same but the fiber is stained dark by the gluey sap, sand from the river, and the outer bark.

[824] *Algodoncillo* (*Pavonia dasypetala*) yields a fiber for making rope and tumplines. The outer bark is removed as a glove from the stem of the bush and the inner portion is used.

[824] *Guarumo* (*Cecropia* sp.) is used in Tala-
[227] manca to make conical fishing nets which
[171] closely resemble those of the northern Guaymí
[482] in Panama. On the Pacific slope, carrying nets are made from it.

[824] A fiber for rope is taken from the *burillo* or *burio* (*Heliocarpus excelsior*) on both sides of the range. It is stripped from the tree and passed back and forth over cuts made in a hard wood tree until the outer bark is removed. The Cabécar men and women make such rope.

[824] The bark of *majagua* (*Hibiscus tiliaceus* L.

283 824 sp.) is used on the Pacific slope for tumplines and rope.

287 [462] [824] **Bark Cloth.** Men generally make bark cloth as it requires considerable strength. There are three kinds of *mastate* or bark cloth made in Talamanca and two on the Pacific side. Red *mastate* (*Brosimum costaricensis* Liebmann) and white *mastate* (*Brosimum* sp.) are used on both slopes. The third kind is *Poulsenia armata* (Miq.) Standl; Moraceae. The method of preparation is similar.

The bark of the first two trees is cut and rolled at a right angle to the grain. The outer surface is removed by beating with a stick and then with a wooden club cut with horizontal grooves, one side of which is usually slightly curved. It is soaked in water, pulled to the shape and size desired, and left in the sun to dry. Stones are placed at the corners to hold the shape. [513] The cloth is used for blankets, hammocks (amongst the Cabécar only), to carry babies, as tumplines, belts, and loincloths, [438] and as an article of trade with the Borucas.

The third type, *testí* in Cabécar, is prepared by cutting around the tree with a machete the desired size for the cloth. Then a wedge-shaped wooden stick is used to peel it off the trunk. The piece is then doubled and the outer bark is cut in a thin sheet and rolled back, leaving the cambium or inner bark. This is soaked for several days and is afterwards beaten with a wooden stick to make it pliable and soft. It is used primarily for blankets.

[824] [415] In Talamanca and in Chirripó, the wild rubber tree (*Castilla* sp.) also furnishes a cloth for hunting pouches.

286 415 **Net Bags.** The Bribri have long been famous for the manufacture of net bags (*see* Trade), although the Cabécares are known to make them occasionally. They serve a variety of purposes besides being a depository for personal and household things. They are used for hunting and for carrying all manner of cargo, from plantains to babies. Most bags are made of *pita* or *caburya* thread and have a long handle which also acts as a tumpline. The usual shape [224] is baglike, but those for blow-gun hunting are elongated and have small divisions or pockets. [227] At times in Talamanca, casting nets are made from the same material and in the same technique.